



# GULF PEACE TEAM

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8 May, 1991

We have very good hopes that this walk for peace and justice in the Middle East will be a success. We look forward to the participation of a number of veteran peace activists (including Jim Douglass from the US), of Members of Parliament from several European countries, and of representatives from many peace organisations world-wide. We do hope that your organisation will be able to send a delegate to this promising event.

*Gulf Peace Team*

# GULF PEACE TEAM فريق الخليج للسلام

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AMMAN - JORDAN

4 May, 1991

Dear friends,

Greetings from Jerusalem! We are writing to invite you to the forthcoming Jerusalem-Amman walk for peace and justice in the Middle East, starting on 4 June.

This is, in a way, an odd time for such a walk. The Middle East and the world are full of terrible disasters (in Kurdistan, in Iraq, in Africa, in Bangladesh...), and there seem to be more pressing needs elsewhere. However, as members of the Gulf Peace Team, we feel that it is important not to lose sight of our long-term objectives in the ensuing confusion, and to reaffirm the demands of lasting peace in the Middle East. Among these demands is a just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian question, which already threatens to fall into oblivion. Our walk from Jerusalem to Amman is a small attempt to keep this issue on the international agenda. The message of this walk is further developed in the enclosed "statement".

The starting date of the walk, 4 June, is the International Day of Children as Victims of War. The walk will last six days, in memory of the six-day war, which began on 5 June, 1967. A creative programme of nonviolent activities is under preparation. We hope that this walk for peace and justice will be followed by a humanitarian convoy to Iraq, starting from Amman.

We expect volunteers from about 20 countries to participate in this walk, and we would be delighted if you were able to join. If you are not able to join yourself, please help us to spread the word. We are particularly keen to recruit volunteers who may be seen to represent a larger community (veteran peace activists, principled politicians, clergypersons, artists, etc.).

We also need financial support, mainly to help volunteers from Third World countries to join the walk (we are aiming at a very broad international representation). Cheques payable to the Gulf Peace Team, with the mention "Peace Walk", can be sent to: Gulf Peace Team (London), 7, Cazenove Road, London N16 6PA (Tel: 44-81-442 4705; Fax: 44-81-442 4649).

Further details about this event can be obtained from Ginnie Landon (Gulf Peace Team) at the same address.

In peace and hope,

Bela Bhatia

Jean Drèze

Mark Chapman

(members of the Gulf Peace Team, currently in Jerusalem)

DB. Jim Douglass and several members of the European Parliament have just agreed to come!

Contact Persons: JEAN DREZE & KATHY KELLY

JERUSALEM-AMMAN WALK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Statement

We, members and friends of the Gulf Peace Team, intend to walk from Jerusalem to Amman, starting on 4 June, 1991 (the International Day for Children as Victims of War). Our walk is an appeal for a concerted effort by the international community to achieve peace and justice in the Middle East through nonviolent means.

This walk extends earlier efforts made by the Gulf Peace Team to prevent the Gulf war (particularly by setting up an international peace camp between the opposing armies), as well as to highlight and combat the sufferings inflicted by this war on the people of the Middle East.

Our group includes both local residents and volunteers from all over the world. We are united in the belief that true friendship between people of different national, cultural, religious and ethnic identities is possible, and that their conflicts can be resolved through peaceful means. The comprehensive devastation caused by the Gulf war illustrates the failure of armed confrontation as an alternative. Despite the formal ceasefire, this war has left a horrifying legacy of human suffering, economic destitution, environmental destruction, social conflict and international tension extending well beyond the boundaries of the war zone.

We believe that genuine and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without a just and realistic solution to the Palestinian question, and the choice of the Jerusalem-Amman itinerary reflects this belief.

Widely-accepted United Nations resolutions on Palestine already provide a viable framework for reaching such a solution through nonviolent means. We appeal for the speedy implementation of these resolutions, and for the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East involving all concerned parties.

We deplore all human rights violations and acts of violence connected with this dispute, and we urge that they cease forthwith. We are especially concerned with the sufferings caused by the continued military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

We are all committed to peaceful and cordial behaviour during the walk. Our planned activities include fasting, holding silent vigils, planting trees and other symbolic expressions of good will and solidarity.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: (1) Karl-Erik Paasonen or Kathy Kelly, Gulf Peace Team, Amman (Tel: 962-6-665 410; Fax: 962-6-665 345); OR (2) Ginnie Landon, GPT, London (Tel: 44-71-442 4705; Fax: 44-71-442 4649); OR (3) Jo Parsons, GPT, Philadelphia (Tel: 1-215-482 0647; Fax: 1-215-482 6238).  
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JERUSALEM-AMMAN WALK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this walk is to re-assert international concern for peace and justice in the Middle East, with a particular focus on the Israeli-Palestinian question. Our message is further developed in the enclosed "statement".

DATES: The walk will start from Jerusalem on 4 June, 1991, the International Day of Children as Victims of War. It will last six days, in memory of the six-day war, which began on 5 June, 1967.

ITINERARY: Jerusalem to Amman (exact route to be decided). The length of the walk will be around 120 kms.

PREPARATION: All participants are requested to arrive in Jerusalem by 1 June. Given the sensitive and possibly even dangerous nature of this walk, good preparation is crucial.

PARTICIPATION: We expect a relatively small group (perhaps 50 to 100 persons), but with a very broad international composition, a good representation of major peace organisations, and some local participation.

STYLE OF WALK: We intend to walk in a gentle style (e.g. in silence, singing, or chanting, but not shouting slogans and waving banners), to minimise the risk of being stopped. A creative programme of nonviolent action is being prepared.

FINANCE: All volunteers should be self-financing (note that flying to Jerusalem is, from many countries, much cheaper than flying to Amman). In addition, we hope that every participant will be able to contribute \$ 50 to organisational costs. Participants are encouraged to get sponsorship from friends, peace groups, churches, etc.

*Sponsorship forms will be available from the Gulf Peace Team Office!*

SUPPORT MESSAGES: Please try to bring support messages from well-known personalities and organisations. This can be very helpful for publicity purposes.

IMPORTANT REMARK: It is quite likely that, in the West Bank, military personnel will use intimidating tactics to stop the walk (as happened on several occasions during our first Amman-Jerusalem walk). It is important that as many participants as possible should be united in their resolve to continue walking despite this opposition. This means taking the risk of being arrested. However, those who are anxious to avoid that risk should be able to do so by walking in separate groups.

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All participants are requested to get in touch prior to the walk with one of the following persons: (1) Karl-Erik Paasonen or Kathy Kelly, Gulf Peace Team, Amman (Tel: 962-6-665 410; Fax: 962-6-665 345); (2) Ginnie Landon, Gulf Peace Team, London (Tel: 44-81-442 4705; Fax: 44-81-442 4649); (3) Jo Parsons, Gulf Peace Team, Philadelphia (Tel: 1-215-482 0647; Fax: 1-215-482 6238).  
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## YESH GVUL

Private Amit Lewenhoff (19) of the Israeli army is serving 28 days in jail for refusing duty in the occupied territories. It is his fourth sentence on the same charge. On April 4 he was jailed for 28 days for refusing active duty in Bethlehem; on May 15, he got 19 days ("to match his age," said the judge) for refusing a posting to the Golan Heights; and he was jailed for a third term in June. The prison terms have been almost consecutive, with only a few days of liberty in between.

In 1987, Lewenhoff was founder-member and spokesman for a group of 16 high-school students who, on the eve of their induction, wrote to defence minister Yitzchak Rabin, requesting to serve within the "green line" (pre-1967 Israel) so as not "to take part in repressive actions and occupation, which definitely goes against our conscience ... If ordered to take part in repressive actions, we will be forced to refuse ..."

~~Drafted into the armoured corps in August 1988,~~ Lewenhoff excelled in basic training and was recommended for a tank commanders' course. From the outset of his military service, he had requested not to serve in the occupied territories; when the trainees were posted to serve in Bethlehem, he refused, and was jailed for the first time.

His fourth imprisonment, coming so close after the first three terms, may foreshadow successive jailings, with the aim of breaking his spirit and forcing him to disregard the dictates of his conscience. There have been numerous cases of refuseniks receiving repeated postings to service in the territories, with each refusal drawing a further sentence.

Lewenhoff is the seventh conscript jailed for refusing service in the occupied territories since the onset of the intifada. Some 70 reservists have likewise been imprisoned for the same "offence", though in fact the number of refuseniks is very much larger, running into the hundreds (only a fraction are jailed).

Five days before Lewenhoff first went to prison, his father Carlos, a reservist, completed a 35 day sentence likewise for refusing service in the occupied territories. Carlos was born in Holland to Auschwitz survivors; from 6, he lived in Uruguay, and at 21, he emigrated to Israel. He is a printer and journalist at the weekly "Zo Haderech".

Amit's mother, Irene Bleier Lewenhoff, is head nurse at the intensive care unit of a Tel Aviv hospital. She is the daughter of Eduardo Bleier, one of the "disappeared" during Uruguay's military regime; witnesses report he was tortured and killed in a military jail.

Amit Lewenhoff and the other refuseniks are backed by YESH GVUL, the support group which highlights their protest as the focus of its campaign to end Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip.

Our efforts include financial aid to the refuseniks' dependents, who are denied family allowances during their imprisonment. Such aid is vital to ensure that no-one is forced to disregard the dictates of his conscience due to financial constraints.

In recent months, YESH GVUL sympathisers outside Israel have promoted an adoption campaign whereby groups sponsor jailed refuseniks, helping to provide for their families and conducting a support campaign. In general, adoption projects include:

- a) financial aid - \$450 for the refuseniks' families, and any additional money raised to fund our campaign;
- b) political and moral support e.g. sponsoring publicity for the refusenik and his adoption in your local media; letters to the refusenik; protest letters to the nearest Israeli legation;

If you wish to adopt AMIT LEWENHOFF, please contact:  
YESH GVUL, PO Box 6953, Jerusalem 91068, Israel  
Or phone Peretz Kidron TEL: 972.2.434171

## YESH GVUL

First sergeant (res) David Golan (36) has been jailed for 28 days for refusing to serve in the Gaza Strip. Prior to sentencing, Golan declared:

"I am a scion of the Jewish people which has fought throughout its history for the right to independence, without being dominated by another people. I find no moral right to deny others the dignity and independence I seek for myself. 'That which is hateful to you, do not do to others.' I do not wish to engage in repression, or in the physical degradation of someone fighting for his dignity. I believe in the Palestinians' right to a dignified existence, just as in our own selfsame right."

Golan is the son of Holocaust survivors: both his parents were inmates of the Auschwitz extermination camp. He lives in Jerusalem, where he graduated the Hebrew University with a degree in philosophy and education. He is married (wife Efrat) with a year-old daughter. Golan supplemented his 3 years of compulsory military service (in the navy, including duty during the 1973 Yom Kippur war) by voluntarily signing on for an extra year; in the reserves, he serves with an armoured infantry unit.

Another refusenik, Dudu Palma (39) of Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi, got 35 days (21 suspended) in his third conviction for selective refusal, after a 28-day sentence earlier this year. Palma likewise is the son of Holocaust survivors. He is married (wife Ma'ayan) and has four children. An editor at the literary magazine "Shdemot", his play about Hanna Senesh, a Jewish heroine of World War Two, was staged at the 1986 Acre theatre festival.

Palma served with the paratroopers; as a reservist, he saw combat duty in Lebanon, taking part in the battles of Sydon and Beirut. Again posted to Lebanon in 1983, he refused, drawing a 35-day jail sentence.

Palma: "...Feeling responsible for the future of Israeli democracy, I can no longer be party to anti-democratic acts verging upon war crimes. The immediate choice was either join the herd (like the humans-turned-beasts in Ionesco's anti-fascist play 'Rhinoceros') - or to protest...It is incredible that a people which so recently savoured its own political independence, should so lightly deny it to members of another people. By this step, I believe I am defending our fragile democracy which is being swept to the precipice by the rising tide of nationalism and Khumeinist fundamentalism."

The imprisonment of Golan and Palma brings the number of Yesh Gvul members jailed since the onset of the intifada to 50. However, numerous commanders being reluctant to prosecute refuseniks, their actual number is believed to be very much larger, probably running into the hundreds.

Yesh Gvul extends moral and material support to jailed refuseniks, whose families receive a modest grant (\$500) to see them through the period of imprisonment; we work to bring their protest to the attention of the Israeli public as part of our campaign against the occupation.

Our efforts are aided by sympathisers in other countries, who "adopt" individual refuseniks, raising funds to care for their families and conducting educational work in support of Yesh Gvul. David Golan has been adopted by a coalition in Miami, Florida, comprising the local chapter of New Jewish Agenda, together with women's organisations and peace groups.

As the Palestinian intifada enters its second year, we foresee a sharp increase in refusals, with numerous reservists finding their military duties in conflict with the dictates of conscience. We are in urgent need of help in our campaign; in particular, we welcome offers to adopt individual refuseniks. For details, please contact:

YESH GVUL, POB 91068, JERUSALEM 6953, ISRAEL

**Collection Number: AG1977**

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**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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